# Institution-building as a Bridge Between Peacekeeping and Peace-building: Connecting the Security and Peace Nexus[1]

## Introduction

The United Nations (UN) has come to understand that it is no longer possible to separate its different fields of work across i) peace and security, ii) development iii) and rule of law and human rights. These three are inextricably linked, depending on each other for sustainable peace and prosperity. The purpose of this paper is to explore what role UN peacekeeping operations can play in bringing these three very important pillars of the UN's work together, in what today are rapidly changing global, regional and local contexts.

In particular, what is the role of UN peacekeeping in institution-building across all of its mandated areas of responsibility? How does the UN work with its partners—including host governments, other UN actors and donor governments—to ensure that peacekeeping, by definition short-term interventions, contribute effectively to longer-term efforts?

This policy brief outlines recent commentary and recommendations on peacebuilding, institution-building and capacity development in UN peacekeeping and examines the diversity of such mandates provided by the Security Council. It explores the range of UN guidance available to peacekeepers in this area and draws out some of the lessons that have been learned and challenges that peacekeepers face as 'early peacebuilders' with three key roles: to articulate, enable and implement peacebuilding goals. The policy brief concludes with some reflections of ongoing challenges and opportunities.

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[1] The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Challenges Forum Partnership, Secretariat or the Hosts of the Annual Forum 2015.

## About the author

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**INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR THE CHALLENGES OF PEACE OPERATIONS**

## What the 2015 High-Level Reviews Say About Institution-building

The range of recent high-level reviews conducted around the UN's role in peace operations, peacebuilding and women, peace and security provide an opportunity to re-examine how the role of UN peacekeeping in institution-building is conceived and what is understood from the wide ranging experience, lessons and good practices across UN missions.

The High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) in its Report offers a cautionary note about what can be expected from peacekeeping operations in this area and distinguishes between peace operations' role in sustaining peace, as compared to long-term, generational efforts to strengthen state institutions.[2] The Report also warns against supply-driven and overly technical approaches to institution-building.[3] It gives examples of non-integrated capacity-building efforts by the UN and talks about the importance of partnership.[4]

The Secretary-General's Follow-Up Report on the HIPPO Report points to institutions as important vehicles for mediation and political settlements: 'Societies with effective, inclusive and accountable institutions are more likely to withstand crises and peacefully manage disputes'.[5]

The Advisory Group of Experts' Report on the 2015 Peacebuilding Review (AGE) called for retaining conflict and governance related issues in the post 2015 Development Agenda through the inclusion of Sustainable Development Goal 16, to 'promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'. The AGE Report also realistically assesses that a cohesive nation-state and an inclusive system of governance will require enormous work in the aftermath of conflict—clearly pointing to an early role for UN peacekeeping.

The SG Report on Women, Peace and Security calls on all international partners to support national institutions of government particularly with the collection of data on incidents and trends of conflict related sexual violence as well as women, peace and security more generally.[6]

Through each of these reviews, the UN and UN peacekeeping is encouraged to take a principled, lessons-based, coordinated and practical approach to how to engage in institution-building and capacity development. At least on this issue, all three reviews are consistent in their messaging on how peacekeeping should approach this challenging task, based in large part on lessons

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[2] United Nations, *Uniting our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnerships and People*, Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, A/70/95-S/2015/446, 17 June 2015, para. 128.
[3] UN, *Uniting our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnerships and People*, A/70/95-S/2015/446, 2015, para. 132.
[4] UN, *Uniting our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnerships and People*, A/70/95-S/2015/446, 2015, para. 157.
[5] United Nations, *The Future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*, Report by the Secretary-General, A/70/357-S/2015/682, 2 September 2015, para. 10.
[6] United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security,* S/2014/693, 23 September 2014, para. 82.

that the Organization has identified.

It can be argued that an important corollary to the treatment of institution-building in each of these reviews is also the importance they place on the UN making a cultural shift and adopting a new approach to how it engages with local actors and communities, beyond capital-based national governments. For example, the HIPPO Reports states that '[b]y shifting from merely consulting with local people to actively including them in their work, missions are able to monitor and respond to how local people experience in the impact of peace operations'.[7]

Linking these elements of institution-building and community engagement is essential to ensuring that the institutions that UN peace operations help to build provide the services they should to the populations they are responsible to, and that they are trusted to do so. It also provides UN peace operations with different entry points to institution-building, particularly in contexts where the conflict is not entirely over, where governments may not yet be elected nor representative, and where in some cases the institutions that are built might be, or have been, part of the unresolved conflict.

This policy brief will propose that taking a more grassroots approach to understanding and supporting state-society relations will allow for a more inclusive, effective and sustainable approach to institution-building.

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## Range of Institution-building and Capacity Development Mandates Provided by the Security Council

Mandates for institution-building and capacity development have been with peacekeeping for some time—perhaps the earliest direct reference being in Security Council Resolution 1244 for the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in 1999. In some cases prior to and since Resolution 1244, missions have been mandated with transitional executive or semi-executive authority which, although mandated for very good reasons, at least on a temporary basis actually substitute capacity in the countries in which the UN operates.[8]

In some ways institution-building mandates form the basis for what we now describe as multidimensional peace operations. We recall the experiences of missions such as the UN Integrated Mission in Timor Leste (UNMIT) that had an explicit mandate to build institutions in Resolution 1704 (2006). However, others too have been mandated by the Council to undertake a diverse range of institution- building and capacity development roles. An extensive internal study of the peacebuilding mandates of peacekeeping

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[7] UN, *Uniting our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnerships and People*, A/70/95-S/2015/446, 2015, p. 14.
[8] For example UNMIK, UNMIT and today MINUSCA.

operations was completed by the Center for International Cooperation in 2010.[9]

Before delving in to those mandates it is helpful to consider how institution-building is defined, in the context of the United Nations. Most academic literature concludes that the usage of the term is too wide and diverse to be properly defined. The concept is applied somewhat differently in the areas of development, peacebuilding, rule of law, public administration and governance.[10]

The Secretary-General's Report on Peacebuilding in the Aftermath of Conflict directs us that:

'Institutions—defined broadly as the rules of the game and the organizations that frame and enforce them—provide the incentives and constraints that shape political, economic and social interaction. [… ] We must build on existing institutions to ensure that they are democratic, accountable and professional; allow those institutions to develop at their own pace and with a certain level of experimentation; and sustain institution-building efforts over decades.'[11]

The Civilian Capacities Review (2012) notes that '[s]upporting institution-building involves an inclusive process to determine priorities for the functions that build confidence between States and citizens and help to ensure sustainable peace.'[12]

Others attempt to define, from the outcome end of the efforts, what 'success' should look like. A study by the World Bank identifies a minimum of three core sets of outcomes that have to be achieved for an institution to be defined as successful namely that: (i) it is able to deliver positive results with respect to its core mandate; (ii) it possesses broad legitimacy within the country; and (iii) its operation is durable and resilient.[13]

Across the 16 current UN peacekeeping missions, an internal analysis of Security Council mandate language shows at least 64 separate mandated tasks related to institution-building and capacity development.[14] The table below shows a sample of these mandates.

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[9] Center for International Cooperation, Peacebuilding Components of Peacekeeping Operations: A Review of Security Council Mandates, 2010

[10] See for example Mick Moore with Sheelagh Stewart and Ann Hudock, *Institution Building as a Development Assistance Method: A Review of Literature and Ideas*, SIDA Evaluation Report, Swedish International Development Authority (Skara, 1995).

[11] United Nations, *Peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict*, Report of the Secretary-General, A/67/499-S/2012/745, 8 October 2012, paras. 43 & 44.

[12] United Nations, *Civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict*, Report of the Secretary-General, A/67/312-S/2012/645, 15 August 2012, para. 8.

[13] Lorena Viñuela, Naazneen H. Barma and Elisabeth Huybens, 'Institutions Taking Root: Building State Capacity in Challening Contexts', in Naazneen H. Barma, Elisabeth Huybens, Lorena Viñuela eds., *Institutions Taking Root: Building State Capacity in Challenging Contexts* (World Bank Group: Washington DC, 2014), pp. 1-33.

[14] Note that this total excludes UNMISS as its mandate is now highly constrained under current political conditions. The number would be much higher under the previous mandate.

| INSTITUTION-BUILDING MANDATE | MANDATED PEACEKEEPING MISSION[15] |
|---|---|
| National Border Control/Customs/Coastguard | ONUCI, MINUSTAH |
| Rule of Law: Police, Corrections, Judiciary | MINUSTAH, ONUCI, UNISFA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, MINUSCA, UNMIL |
| SSR and DDR | UNMIL, ONUCI, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, MINUSTAH |
| Electoral Institutions | UNMIK, UNMIL |
| National Human Rights Institutions | MINUSTAH, MINUSCA |
| Extension of State Authority/Local Administration/Governance | UNMIK, UNMIL, ONUCI, MONUSCO, MINUSTAH |
| Administration of Natural Resources | UNMIL |
| National Dialogue and Reconciliation | MINUSCA, MINUSTAH, ONUCI, UNMIL |
| Resettlement and IDPs | MINUSTAH |

By way of example, these institution-building and capacity building mandates can include: working with national and local courts to build their capacity to deliver timely and effective justice; working with national human rights institutions to strengthen their ability to conduct credible investigations of and report on human rights violations; training police in standards of professionalism including respect for human rights and appropriate treatment of women and children; creating space for inclusive nation-wide consultations for example on truth and reconciliation; building administrative governance systems for a wide range of national and local government agencies; and supporting anti-corruption efforts.

However, given some of the new operating and security environments we find peacekeeping being deployed to, such as in Mali, DRC and South Sudan, institution-building mandates as core elements of multidimensional missions are facing some of the strongest challenges yet. How should we build institutions when the conflict is ongoing? How can we play an institution-building role when the security environment is non-permissive? How do we maintain the peacekeeping principle of impartiality if we are supporting the development of the state that continues to be a party to the conflict or continues to engage in serious human rights violations? This, for some, raises questions about whether UN peacekeeping is able to deliver on these tasks in such environments.

[15] ONUCI: Opération des Nations Unies en Côte d'Ivoire; MINUSTAH: UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti; UNISFA: UN Interim Security Force for Abyei; MINUSMA: UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali: MONUSCO: UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; UNMIK: UN Interim Administration in Kosovo; UNMIL: UN Mission in Liberia; MINUSCA: UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

## Range of UN Guidance and Lessons for Peace-keeping Operations on Institution-building and Capacity Development

Much guidance is available to peacekeeping personnel on institution-building and capacity development, from the strategic and broad to the specific and technical. This guidance can be found on the UN Peacekeeping Resources Hub.[16] By way of example, there is a recently approved UN Guidance Note for Effective Use and Development of National Capacity in Post-conflict Contexts (2013) that DPKO contributed to as well as an Early Peacebuilding Strategy detailed further below.[17] The UN Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions has done much work in this area of guidance development for their specific areas of responsibility, such as the DPKO-DFS Guidelines on Police Capacity Building and Development released in late 2015. DPKO has also done several lessons learned studies and internal evaluations on building institutions and capacity on specific mandate responsibilities such as policing, and for particular mission experiences, notably UNMIT.[18]

Some key lessons, reflected in such guidance include that the UN must draw on countries with their own experience of transition to assist others, especially those from the Global South. That what is the feasible within the context of national priorities should become the primary focus and quick wins need to be balanced with long-term results. Peacekeeping must engage in early and integrated planning with UN and other partners to define its institution-building role and contribution to broader efforts.

In addition to guidance and lessons specifically on institution-building, the role of peacekeeping and the importance of this issue for longer term peace-building is clearly reflected in other mainstream departmental guidance such as the Policy on UN Transitions in the Context of Mission Drawdown and Withdrawal. The Transition Policy has five key principles: i) early planning; ii) UN integration; iii) national ownership; iv) national capacity development; and v) effective communication. It considers institution- and capacity-building as key prerequisites for the effective handover of mission responsibilities. It states:

'All UN actors should prioritise capacity development from the outset of their presence and build on existing national capacities in all aspects of mandate implementation and support, in line with the recommendations of the Civilian Capacities Review […] this may include […] collocating UN and host government staff, where appropriate, and subject to General Assembly approval, donating UN built/owned facilities for subsequent utilisation, and

> *...the UN must draw on countries with their own experience of transition to assist others, especially those from the Global South.*

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[16] United Nations, Peacekeeping Resource Hub [website], http://research.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community (Accessed 14 December 2015).

[17] United Nations, *Peace: Keep it. Build it. The Contribution of UN Peacekeeping to early peacebuilding*, A DPKO-DFS Strategy for Peacekeepers, 27 June 2011.

[18] For example DPKO-DFS Evaluation of the use of civilian police experts to support capacity-building in the National Police of Timor-Leste 2013 and UN Peacekeeping Operations in Post-Conflict Timor Leste: Accomplishments and Lessons Learned, UN Policy Best Practices Section, New York, 2005.

strengthening local procurement to the extent possible [...].'[19]

Although the guidance is extensive and accessible, one area where UN peace-keeping is lacking is in the skill sets and training required to be an effective agent of institution-building and capacity development. This is more important in the peacekeeping context than in most, precisely because UN peacekeepers come from such a diverse range of backgrounds and bring their own very specific experience and perspectives to the countries in which they work. Most are specialists in the subject matter they work on—justice or policing for example—rather than being experts in building institutions or capacity development. This gap was identified in the Review on Civilian Capacities.[20]

## Peacekeepers as Early Peacebuilders

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In June 2011 DPKO and the Department of Field Support (DFS) adopted a strategy to assist peacekeepers to prioritise, sequence and plan early peacebuilding tasks, including institution-building. The strategy is based around the principle that there is not a linear path from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, but that peacekeepers are in fact early peacebuilders with real comparative advantages and contributions to make to complex peacebuilding objectives.

Peacekeeping's contribution to peacebuilding hinges around three key roles: advancing the political objectives of the peace process and the mission's mandate (articulating); providing the security umbrella to allow other peacebuilding actors to function (enabling); and laying the foundation for longer term institution-building (implementing). It is in this third area that peacekeepers play a direct role in institution-building. As the Strategy notes:

'The nature and scale of a peacekeeping operation's role in the area of institution-building will depend on its mandate, the local context, the availability of resources and an assessment of the availability of capable, credible and legitimate partners within the host nation. Mandated activities should be focused, based on peacekeeping's comparative advantage and capacities to deliver effectively, tailored to achieve the clearly defined early peacebuilding benchmarks and end state, and built on pre-existing structures if these are assessed to be sufficiently accountable.'[21]

For UN peacekeeping to be successful in early peacebuilding, including institution-building, there are a number of criteria and risk factors that have to be taken into consideration. This will require political will at the

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[19] United Nations, *Policy on UN Transition in the Context of Mission Drawdown or Withdrawal,* 4 February 2013, para. 34.
[20] United Nations, *Civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict,* Independent report of the Senior Advisory Group, A/65/747-S/2011/85, 22 February 2011.
[21] United Nations, *Peace: Keep it. Build it. The Contribution of UN Peacekeeping to early peacebuilding,* A DPKO-DFS Strategy for Peacekeepers, 27 June 2011, p. 4.

national, regional and international levels, and it has to include clear and achievable peacebuilding mandates supported by adequate financing. Good local knowledge is required from strategic, ongoing and holistic assessments. Strong leadership, including at the political level, is essential. Broad national ownership and capacity must be present—for this too, popular engagement in the prioritisation of peacebuilding and institution-building tasks must be ensured. As foreshadowed earlier, the HIPPO's recommendations on the need for peacekeeping missions to engage communities more widely and regularly is pertinent in this regard. As a follow up to HIPPO and as part of the UN DPKO/DFS work with the Civil Affairs components of its missions, DPKO is undertaking exploratory work to develop guidance and tools on how missions can better engage with civil society, what role peacekeeping has to play in the extension of state authority as mandated in some missions, and whether there is more room for missions to shift focus to supporting a vibrant and healthy relationship between the society and the state. These efforts are being undertaken with the missions and civil society partners.[22]

Finally, for peacekeeping's ability to have early impact, UN peacekeeping must be able to deploy rapidly to the areas most in need, with the appropriate skills and equipment as has been highlighted most recently at the 2015 Leaders' Peacekeeping Summit held on 28 September. Finally and importantly, whatever UN peacekeeping does, it must be done in partnership, acknowledging the temporal role of the missions and their mandates as well as the comparative advantages of other partners in the UN system and beyond.

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## Challenges of UN Peacekeeping Engagment in Institution-building in Countries with Unresolved Conflict

A key dilemma for the 'early' peacebuilding role of peacekeeping when it comes to institution-building is the deployment of peacekeeping operations into contexts where the conflict may still be unresolved. In such circumstances, reconciliation will more than likely be in the very early stages and as such the ability to ensure broad and inclusive national ownership, beyond the current elites, will be severely restricted. This goes to our ability to help develop strong foundations for institutions to be perceived by their populations as legitimate, representative and equitable in terms of the services they provide. For these reasons it is clear that institution-building is not merely a technical exercise but a hilghly political one, both in the short- and long-term.

22 Cedric de Coning, 'Institution-building as a Bridge between Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding: Connecting the Security and Peace Nexus', in Challenges Annual Forum, *Institution- and Capacity-building for Peace: Implications of the UN's Review Panels' Recommendations for Future Missions* (Yerevan, 2015).
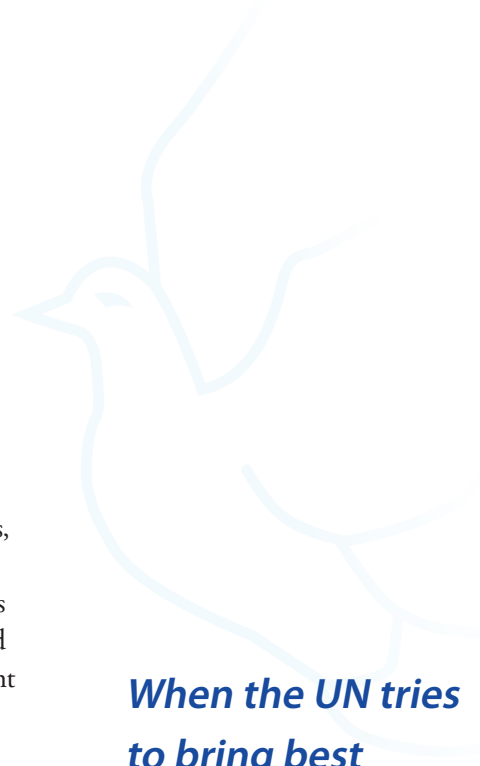
Governance deficiencies are primarily political, especially in fragile and conflict-affected states in which political settlement is still being negotiated. Technical deficiencies in institutions certainly exist, but they are rooted in underlying political conditions and structures that prevent simple fixes.[23]

Experiences providing host governments with international technical assistance reveals that political challenges around institution-building and capacity development can also be highly sensitive, personal and have unforeseen consequences. When the UN tries to bring best practice to a country where that practice does not fit, the mission runs the risk of raising expectations about what is achievable both for the international community and the local population. When institutions are put in a place that require a level of financing that national budgets will never be able to afford, governments become reliant on continuing donor support. When international technical advisers are imposed into those national institutions who are earning dozens of times more in terms of salary than the national staff, a message is sent about double standards and encouraging a brain drain away from those national institutions to international organizations. All actors involved in post-conflict transition must be fully conscious of both intended and unintended impacts as they seek to engage in this endeavour.

'Capacity development creates "winners" and "losers" and affects power relations for better or worse. Identifying, analysing and navigating these power relations and incentive structures [...] must be undertaken carefully to arrive at politically appropriate and technically sound capacity development.'[24]

## The Way Forward

The recent high-level review processes provide an opportunity to shake up the way in which the business of institution-building is conducted. For example, the Reports' support for the idea of two-phase mandating would allow for a better analysis of the situation on the ground in the countries to which the UN deploys, and for the UN to develop more tailored and appropriate institution-building based on the local context. This would help to address issues such as the right timing of investing in institutions, and which institutions, as opposed to focusing on other priority mandates such as protection of civilians, particularly in cases where the conflict not be truly over.

[23] United Nations Development Programme, *Restore or Reform? UN Support to Core Government Functions in the Aftermath of Conflict,* 2014, p.19.
[24] United Nations, *United Nations Guidance Note for Effective Use and Development of National Capacity in Post Conflict Contexts,* 29 July 2013, p. 2.

In a related sense, the HIPPO Report's requirement for better analysis, planning and reporting to the Security Council should also help the UN Security Council to determine when it should mandate an institution-building or extension of state authority role, and when the time is not yet ripe. This would be helpful in addressing concerns about institution-building mandates in unresolved conflict or insecure situations.

In terms of the acknowledged need for the UN to foster stronger state-society relations and build more inclusive and representative institutions, the Reports also foreshadow consideration of how 'compacts' between the international community and a host government of a UN peace-keeping operation might allow for an inclusive engagement across the society about what its needs are, what can be expected from its government and what role there is for the UN.

International intervention to build and sustain peace in a country coming out of conflict is often like assembling a jigsaw puzzle. The pieces come from host governments, civil society, bilateral partners, regional organizations and many parts of the UN system. Bringing those pieces together in a way that is effective and sustainable is one of the greatest challenges. Institution-building is one key section of that puzzle, and many actors play a role in contributing.

Member States have asked UN peacekeeping to also make a contribution, and it is the UN's responsibility now to ensure that what is done in this area contributes to national goals and fits neatly with the work of other partners. UN peacekeeping should push ahead in institution-building in areas where the Organization has a comparative advantage and where thorough and holistic analysis and assessment show that the timing is right.

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# INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR THE CHALLENGES OF PEACE OPERATIONS

The Challenges Forum is a strategic and dynamic platform for constructive dialogue among leading policymakers, practitioners and academics on key issues and developments in peace operations. The Forum contributes to shaping the debate by identifying critical challenges facing military, police and civilan peace operations, by promoting awareness of emerging issues and by generating recommendations for solutions for the consideration of the broader international peace operations community. It is a global network of Partners representing 47 peace operations departments and organizations from 22 countries. www.challengesforum.org